

Press Release

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AbilityOne Program Releases Materials to Celebrate National Disability Employment Awareness Month

Arlington, VA—October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month, and as such, is an exceptional time to celebrate the successes of the AbilityOne Program, which creates employment opportunities that enable people who are blind or have other severe disabilities to fulfill their potential while providing federal customers a wide array of business solutions at a fair market price. Because of the AbilityOne Program, nearly 48,000 people are employed on federal contract work through more than 600 community-based nonprofit agencies across the country.

Although we celebrate these successes, there remains a critical need for the AbilityOne Program and other efforts designed to increase employment opportunities for people with disabilities. Census statistics show only 38% of the overall population of people with disabilities is employed.

As President George W. Bush has noted, “All of our citizens should have the opportunity to live and work with dignity and freedom. Every October, we observe National Disability Employment Awareness Month to recognize the talents, skills and dedication of people with disabilities who are a vital part of our work force.”

During October and throughout the year, AbilityOne stakeholders can plan and conduct AbilityOne recognition and events to show support to the program. New contract awards, ribbon-cutting ceremonies, anniversaries and other milestones, visits by prominent individuals and awards presentations all offer the chance to reach local, state and national leaders as well as local businesses and the media.

AbilityOne posters recognizing National Disability Employment Awareness Month are being mailed to federal agency personnel. These posters, as well as other materials designed to help federal agencies recognize their AbilityOne procurement achievements, can be obtained electronically from the web site of the Committee for Purchase From People Who Are Blind or Severely Disabled at www.AbilityOne.gov. This site also provides additional information about the program, as well as links to more material developed by National Industries for the Blind (NIB) and NISH (serving people with a range of severe disabilities) to help participating nonprofits celebrate National Disability Employment Awareness Month.

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The Committee for Purchase From People Who Are Blind or Severely Disabled is the independent Federal agency that administers the AbilityOne Program (formerly known as the Javits-Wagner-O'Day or "JWOD" Program), which generates employment for individuals who are blind or have other severe disabilities. National Industries for the Blind (NIB) and NISH (serving people with a range of disabilities) are two central nonprofit organizations that have been designated by the Committee to help Federal agencies and nonprofit organizations that employ persons with severe disabilities participate in the AbilityOne Program. The AbilityOne Program's primary means of achieving its employment goal is by facilitating federal government purchases of supplies and services from nonprofit agencies employing such individuals. The Committee's office is located in Arlington, Virginia.